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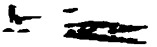
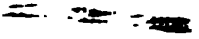
MY GARDEN
& other Poems

Elizabeth C. Campbell
July 1921.





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Yours very sincerely
M. Henderson

ANX420

My Garden

And Other Poems

BY

MARGARET HENDERSON

d) Thomson

EDINBURGH
DAVID DOUGLAS, CASTLE STREET
1896

ANX4202

PREFACE

TO most of those who will probably read the Poems contained in this volume the writer of them was personally known; by most of them dearly loved. But for the sake of others it may be well to preface them by a few words of introduction.

They are a memorial of one to whom God gave many of His best gifts. She was very fair to look upon; her mental endowments were great; her character was a wonderful combination of sweetness and strength, of great gentleness and great endurance; and with a sound and well-balanced judgment, a high ideal of duty

and of truth, and an earnest and steadfast endeavour to fulfil the same, she combined a bright and childlike nature.

Thus endowed, she appeared well fitted for active usefulness and influence for good.

But, as regarded the outward life, God saw otherwise. He early laid on her the cross of pain and suffering, which was never again to be entirely removed. How she bore this—with what ever-growing meekness, cheerfulness, patience, and submission to her Heavenly Father's will—those who knew her best, best understood. And yet, after her death, it was strange to discover how far-reaching her quiet influence had been, and how her "hidden life" had yet been known and read of many.

Her gift of writing, both in verse and

prose, was a well-defined one; but in her many years of illness and pain its exercise was necessarily and frequently interrupted, and it never reached the development it might otherwise have done. She was told that "anything she chose to send would be accepted" by those who could well appreciate literary excellence; and even on her deathbed, when awaking out of what seemed a trance of weakness and suffering, she told us that a complete story, whose scene was in her native county, had formed itself in her mind.

She had from childhood a wonderful consideration, and a tender and comprehending sympathy which made her companionship inexpressibly sweet; and one of the great alleviations of her own suffering was her constant occupation about

what might contribute to the happiness and comfort of others. She had a great delight in all living creatures—they seemed to understand and attach themselves to her —and her birds and dogs were the solace of many a weary hour.

Underlying her beautiful life was a deep religious faith, which found its expression far more in deeds than in words; and perhaps her patient and submissive acceptance of whatever was God's will best conveyed the lesson He meant her life to teach.

Margaret Henderson, the youngest daughter of John Henderson, W.S., was born at Wick 12th January 1843, and died at Ormlie Lodge, Thurso, 21st July 1893.

A. B. H.

Ormlie Lodge, 1895.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
My Garden	1
A Song	7
A Song	9
Love and Duty	10
My Guest	13
A Parable	17
Two Prayers	21
Remembrance	25
Spring	26
A Spring Night	28
A Northern Spring Song	30
Our Spring	33
Three Sunsets	36
Wrecked	40

PAGE

Comforted 42
Fiddling and Singing 46
The Lost Lyre 48
The Legend of St. John of the Cross . 52
Love Eternal 55
Autumn 58
The Wood Sere Tints was Taking . 61
"Pale January's steely breath" . . 63
New Year 64
The River 65
The Good Comrade 68
Heart's Ease 69
Wings 70
Questions 72
The Way 74
The Right Way 75
Companionship 77
Friendship 80
Prayer 81
Answers 82
The Patience of Hope 85

PAGE

Waiting 87

An Advent Thought 91

Praise of the Heavenly Country . . 93

"I Wept as I Lay Dreaming" . . 96

"There will come a Day" . . . 97

Resurgam 98

The Three Captors 101

Death of the Rose 105

My Garden

1

I HAD a garden to the east,
Wherein all flowers that grew,
Tinted as tender as the dawn,
Budded, and shone with dew.

2

For hedges stood the close-cut yew,
And in each grassy place
Stars of the spotless asphodel
Looked up with shining face.

3

What time the year was young, and sweet
In light my garden lay,
I heard, while wrapped in deep content,
A Stranger pass that way.

4

No form I saw, I heard a hand
Fall soft upon the lock;
And, hark! a voice: "Behold, I stand
Beside the door and knock."

5

High was the door, where only reached
Creepers my hand had twined;
I smiled secure, and heeded not
The voice that spake behind.

6

What time the year was gayer grown,
And lilies paled to death,
Deeper upon the rose's breast
Came sun and summer's breath.

7

White as the snow oped moss-sheathed buds,
And glowed the dusky red;
High up the lark sent song, and up
The blue stretched overhead.

8

Then came again unto the gate
  The hand I heard before,
And sweeter came the voice: "Behold,
  I stand beside the door."

9

But joyful in my roses' glow
  And dreaming pansies' gaze,
I turned not to the bolted gate
  That hid the desert ways.

10

Out on the moor, where no man trod,
  And hills where clouds lay low,
I heard afar with solemn step
  The Stranger turn to go.

11

While in my garden deeper still
  Lay beauty's spell of light,
And watchful moon and climbing stars
  Made twilight of the night;

12

What time the year grew still and sad,
Broad slanting from the west,
Came crimson light and clouds of gold
That silent spake of rest ;

13

Then o'er the garden sighing passed
A sweet, mysterious breath,
As though an angel passing by
Had told my flowers of death.

14

Drooped on the wall my fairest rose,
Sleeping the pansies lay,
The leaves took colours from the sky,
And crimsoned all the way.

15

And I, grown lonely and alone,
My garden desolate,
Heard yet again that step draw near,
That hand upon the gate.

16

Again, more solemnly and slow,
Came that strange voice of yore,
Again it spake the words, "Behold,
I stand beside the door."

17

And while I, weeping, turned to hear,
Yearning His face to see,
The bolted gate flew wide, and lo!
My Saviour stood by me.

18

Sweeter than dream of mother's smile,
O Face serene! was Thine;
Blessing was in Thy pierced hands
Laid silently on mine.

19

O Friend Divine! was it from Thee,
From Thee my heart was turned?
Was it Thy voice I heard so long?
Thy love I coldly spurned?

20

Behold my treasures, withered now,
A gift too poor are they;
Behold my heart, unloving, dead,
Too dead to give away!

21

Yet the Lord took my worthless gifts;
Took them, and gave again:
Pardon, whose perfect flower is peace—
Love, without thought of pain.

22

O Christ! my Love and Peace art Thou,
The living Vine and true,
Walk in the garden of my heart,
And bid it bloom anew!

A Song

OH, never pipe the winds so sweet
As when we two were young!
Oh, never come from throat of bird
Such songs as then were sung!
Wind in the tree, bird on the lea,
Piping, singing for you and me.

Oh, never grow in sun-sloped beds
Posies so dainty sweet;
Oh, never grow such grasses green
As those beneath our feet!
Violets blue, and larkspur true,
Growing, blowing for me and you.

But still, and still the winds can pipe,
  And still from dappled bird
Come songs as sweet upon the lea
  As ever listener heard.
It is not they, alas! to-day—
'Tis we, 'tis we have passed away.

For still the posies bud and blow,
  And grasses green are there,
Heart's-ease and pinks and lavender
  Smell sweet upon the air.
And time brings gain, but time brings pain,
For youth comes never back again.

A Song

THE time, the time I know not,
But methinks it was the spring,
When I heard within the woodland green
A sweet bird sing.

Oh, sweeter than the thrush at dusk,
Or linnet on the spray,
He poured unto the list'ning trees
His full heart's lay.

Long he sang of Love and gladness,
Of sun, and wind, and rain,
But through all the singing wandered
Like a low refrain,

"All things are sweet,—Love is most sweet,
And Love is Life's gain;
But only Love in Heaven is Love
That hath no pain."

Love and Duty

1

THE Queen and her maids sat spinning,
The sun hung low the while,
And one sang sweet in the silence,
The creeping hours to wile.

2

The song was of Love and Duty,
"And both," sang she, "are fair,
But the love of Love is common,
The love of Duty rare.

3

"Love is the love of every age,
And Love is incense sweet,
Which holy women wrapped in prayer,
And laid at Christ's fair feet.

4

" Love is a draught a king might drink,
Though a child hold the cup,
And at the table where Love sits
Angels might fitly sup.

5

" And Love is mild, but Duty stern,
And pale yet bright her face,
She may not weep, although she folds
Dead sons in her embrace.

6

" She holds a cup a king might drink,
In a sore wounded hand;
She looks with eyes divinely calm
Through every age and land.

7

" She has no gift like Love for dower,
No song like Love for rest;
But there is heaven in her smile,
Peace lying on her breast.

8

" Love thou may'st love for Love's sweet sake,
But if God dearer be,
Do thou for God's sake Duty love,
And God through Duty see."

9

The song went out into silence,
The day above was dead,
When the pale Queen rose with weeping,
And to her maids she said :

10

" Now to the Queen of whom was sung,
Myself a Queen I go ;
Perchance the peace that dwells with her
My spirit yet may know.

11

" Or if through love of God I make
Through Duty God my goal,
From the pale Queen's embrace at last
He will receive my soul."

My Guest

1

THROUGH western winds the spring blew soft,
And smiled through sunshine on our eyes,
The happy birds began to build,
And parting clouds showed softer skies.

2

I heard the wind awake the wood,
And bursting buds made answer low;
The sun looked down on dreaming pines,
And lit their shafts with tender glow.

3

On grassy floors of fairy green
Rare colours flashed from burnished wings,
And all the sunny air was rife
With humming voice of living things.

4

I saw from out my latticed pane
The festal joy of bird and flower,
As if some holiday of Time
Drew to its zenith hour by hour.

5

I saw the trees spread tender green,
And woo the restless birds to stay;
I saw the flowers' enchanted doors
Wide thrown for bees that chanced that way.

6

I said, "I too will have my guest,
And I will make my chamber fair,
Perchance some friend in passing by
Will see my home, and tarry there."

7

I gathered violets for their scent,
And lilies for their stainless white;
I wreathed my chamber round with green,
I buried sadness out of sight.

8

I hung my doves within the door,
And opened wide the latticed pane,
That all the eager joy without
Might enter like some sweet refrain.

9

And then I sat, and waited still,
Lest coming steps should miss my ear;
Since either men or angels' feet
Are ever passing, far or near.

10

But noon to evening crept and fell,
And shadows lengthened on the floor,
Until a perfect silence reigned
On all the world outside the door.

11

Then, lo! into my chamber crept
A sense of peace like wings outspread;
I could have thought to look and see
A holy Face above my head.

12

And this sweet thought within me rose,
As though by heavenly fingers sown,
My heart no lonely feast need keep,
I need not say, "I am alone."

13

Not with my eyes my Guest I saw,
And yet His presence made me glad;
Not with my lips I converse held,
Yet but for Him I had been sad.

14

Our humble feast He maketh glad,
Our meanest room a Heaven grows,
The darkest shadow on the wall,
If seen in Him, a glory glows.

15

For ever thus my chamber be
Prepared for Thee, O Christ unseen,
Who, missing other voice and form,
Thyself the Guest Divine hast been.

A Parable

1

WHEN first the bird with shy brown eye
Peeps from the sheltering nest,
Sees a fair world about him lie,
In all God's colours drest;

2

In heaven a sun with golden hair,
On earth green springing grass,
And sounds of music everywhere
From happy birds that pass;

3

He wakens first to wonder strong,
Then wonder longing brings;
He tries to speak, and finds a song—
Would fly, and, lo! has wings!

4

Now long farewell to mother mild
And to the warm lined nest,
The sky allures the singing child,
He cares no more for rest.

5

And we, thy children, Father great,
Safe in those arms of Thine,
See all Thy world's redeemed estate
Bathed in the light divine.

6

We long to speak our thoughts that burn,
And, lo! our souls have voice;
We long to fly, and then return,
And finding wings, rejoice.

7

Alas! our Father, with desire,
A better rest to meet,
We lose our way, our wings we tire,
We cannot find Thy feet.

8

Not far Thou art, but we are low,
Lost in the world's cold ways;
Heaven smiles above, but where we go
We cannot see its rays.

9

The world, Thy world, leads far away,
From out Thine arms so still;
The child that would go forth must stray
Beyond the Father's will.

10

Oh! make us fear to lose the charm
Of knowing Thou art near,
The peace that does not know alarm,
Since with Thee is no fear;

11

From out Thine arms to heaven fly,
And to the kingdom come,
Before we dream of liberty
That does not breathe of home.

12

This, this were best, yet who may know
The best that God can give?
It must be best when He bids "Go,"
Or best in Him to live.

Two Prayers

1

ONE stood and cried,
"O Earth! sweet mother, clothed in loveliness,
Drop on me now the mantle of thy power!
All are thy children: I a son no less,
Seeking by right of sonship now my dower.
Sweet mother Earth! my portion give to me,
A portion in the glorious things I see;
Since I am thine, oh, give me all in thee!"

2

One knelt and prayed,
"Holiest Father! with all glory bright,
Let me come nigh, so near that I may speak.
Made through the sonship of Thy Son a child,
I may not fear Thy face to see and seek,

And being fearless hide myself in Thee,
Asking a portion that I cannot see,
Except by knowing Thou abidst in me."

3

Earth smiled, and, lo!
Her smile created blessing where it fell,
And gave her son the heritage he sought.
On every side the joy of life was his,
Joy that brought joy, riches that riches brought.
All on the shore of time his treasure lay,
Growing and growing with the passing day—
A permanence of glory round his way.

4

Then from the river side
A silent mist uprose,
Crept o'er the low, dank fields
Where the dread Jordan flows.
The gold and glory changed,
Withered the pleasant land,
And, lo! the cup of life
Trembled within his hand.

"Earth, my sweet mother! this my portion fades,
Mine eyes grow dim, give me thine aid!" he cried,
Stumbled upon the river brink, and died!

5

The prayer passed.
Beyond the gates of speech it passed away
Where all creation's groans make sad the air,
And found an answer where it entered in:
Divine interpreting of human prayer,—
Waters like rivers round the soul to flow,
Fires that kindle where the feet must go,
Temptation's battle, and the cup of woe.

6

Sad heritage!
But in the waters *One* to keep the feet;
And in the fire One human, yet divine;
And in the soul the while a quiet rest
As of a child that sang, "My hand in Thine,
"O Father! this is peace, I have no fear;
The river is not dark when Thou art near,
And no flame kindles where Thy step I hear!"

7

Then from the water side
A silent mist uprose,
Crept o'er the low, dank fields
Where the dread Jordan flows;
Quenched all the lurid fire,
The water's channel dried,
Parted a stormy cloud
That hid the other side.
And, lo! the weary child,
Bewildered, not afraid,
Knelt on the solemn shore
In sight of heaven and prayed—
"Father, the heritage is fair to see,
Which through Thy Christ Thou givest unto me!
It is not *death* that calls Thy child to Thee,
But the first breath of Immortality!"

Remembrance

I THOUGHT the years, like some slow creeping sea,
Might steal thy memory away from me,
Chilling that woe to common sadness down,
That made thy loss to me all loss in one.
But each pale season, Spring at Winter's side,
Sweeps Sorrow back on her returning tide;
And, lo! within her hand a torch of flame
Kindled by Love, to show thy sweetest name
Still on its quiet grave within my breast,
Which only Time with flowers and grass hath dressed—
And like the angel by the empty tomb,
Remembrance watching in thy vacant room,
Tells me thou hast but journeyed on before
To meet me later at God's golden door.

Spring

1

WHEN Spring went into the garden
Her holiday time to keep,
She walked about in the borders
And found the flowers all asleep.

2

So first she wakened the snowdrops,
And washed their faces with rain,
And then she fed them with sunlight,
And gave them white frocks again.

3

The crocuses next she summoned,
In purple stripes and yellow,
And she bade the south wind blow them,
Till each one kissed his fellow.

4

The nodding daffodils heard her,
And curtsied low as she passed,
Each blossom drooped like a pennon
Hung out from a tall green mast.

5

Into the violets' eyes she looked,
And spoke till she made them hear.
"What are you dreaming now?" she asked;
They answered, "That Spring is here."

6

And then the trees stretched their fingers,
And opened their curled-up leaves;
And the birds who sat and watched them
Flew straight to the cool green eaves.

7

One made his nest in the ivy,
And one in the apple-tree,
But the thrush showed his in secret
To the south wind and the bee!

A Spring Night

WITHIN the chamber is sultry air,
The sick man lies on his pillow there;

In wearisome tossings to and fro
The fever has burned his pulses low.

He holds his watch in his feeble hands,
And counts the hours by its running sands.

He watches the ticking moments pass
The noiseless finger under the glass.

It reaches three, and he questions slow
Whether his life will return or no?

The patient nurse, with her watchful eye,
Can see what is coming by-and-by.

The sky is red with the dawning day,
But his life is ebbing fast away.

The spring morn shines on the window pane,
Children and birds are awake again.

The glad earth smiles in the joy she feels,
And the flower bells ring their festal peals.

The lads go singing through meadows wide,
A blossoming world on every side.

But stiller the room where the dying lies,
And the nurse draws near to close his eyes.

His hands are folded upon his breast,
She covers the moveless face for rest;

Then she departs. It is chill and lone,
And none is left but the sleeping one.

(*From the German of Theodor Storm.*)

A Northern Spring Song

1

O'ER field and dusky hedge-row
May flings her veil of green,
And where the whin shines golden
A linnet's breast is seen;
There, in its warm heart hidden,
Is her brown nest, I ween.

2

From out his cloudy covert,
Above the springing corn,
The lark sends down rejoicing
His song of gladness born—
The song which love and sunshine
Awaken morn by morn.

3

Now on low slopes and hillsides
  Trod by the children's feet,
Primrose and budding crowfoot
  Look up their eyes to meet;
And on a wind, the clover
  Sends them her greeting sweet.

4

Seaward the river wanders,
  Above the swallows skim,
And past the ranks of iris
  That guard its flashing brim,
The kingcup, lightly leaning,
  Sees there her golden rim.

5

Nor in these green haunts only,
  The breast of singing bird,
The quick'ning breath of spring-time
  Such life and joy have stirred;
In souls which have their winter
  The call to wake is heard.

6

God send us each such waking,
  Throw wide the heart's low door,
The time of birds' sweet singing
  And flowers of spring restore,
And into every spirit
  His May of gladness pour!

Our Spring

1

IF we might ask of God again
  Some thing from earth to heaven returned,
I think our hearts with wishes stirred,
  One thing to seek had surely yearned,
One prayer into God's sight to bring,
  And ask Him, "Give us back our spring."

2

Not to the earth the swift return
  Of bird, and bloom, and sunny air;
But in ourselves the bliss to feel,
  Of youth and purpose everywhere;
To stand within the shining ring,
  And know that all around 'twas spring.

3

Spring in the hopes that hang like buds
Upon the spreading tree of life;
Spring in the thoughts, a dreamy fleet
Launched boldly on the sea of strife,
O Lord! that holdest everything—
Give, if it please Thee, back our spring.

4

But if our youth may come no more,
And Hope lie still, entombed and dead,
While all our life the sadness feels
Of one short spring for ever fled;
Let still this prayer before Thee stray,
A prayer Thou wilt not turn away,—

5

Oh! give us heaven in our hopes,
Buds on the Tree of Life to be,
And give us thoughts like doves of peace
To wander o'er the crystal sea;
Then our dead hearts shall wake to sing
And praise Thee for a better spring.

6

Thy hand the tide of youth shall turn
  Back to the river of Thy throne,
And upward every thought shall tend,
  Which in the air of Heaven hath grown,
While patiently we wait to see
  The spring-time of Eternity.

Three Sunsets

1

A LOW sweet wind came out of the south
And whispered of rain to the land,
And the shining waves of the silver sea
Crept up to kiss the sand.

2

There was glory on the silver sea
From a setting sun in the west,
There was singing of birds in bush and tree
Singing the sun to rest.

3

And a wakeful moon was climbing up
On the edge of a little cloud,
With her face half hid by its pallid fringe,
White as a maiden's shroud.

4

There were eyes that looked on the sunset,
And some that looked out to the sea,
There were ears that listened the south wind's voice,
And the birds in bush and tree.

5

One was a woman weary, weary
With a hope that was almost dead,
Waiting a ship that was never coming
In dawn or sunset red.

6

She said, "Oh, waiting makes me weary,
But I must watch because I pray;
Perhaps to-night he comes, or in the dawn,
If not, another day."

7

She did not hear the south wind sighing,
"Sweet soul, he comes no more to thee,

Three moons ago went he through wreck and storm
To sail the shoreless sea.

* * * * *

8

Two eyes there were that watched the sunset,
Eyes that had scarcely learnt to weep—
A child who sent the moon a good-night kiss,
And softly went to sleep.

9

Nothing to dream of but the waters
Where his toy bark might smoothly lie,
Nothing to wait for in a dawning new
But the sun in the sky!

10

Oh, shine for him, sweet sun in heaven,
He loves because he has not fear;
Play round him, waves, he only knows
A tiny boat to steer.

* * * * *

11

Eyes that have almost done with sorrow,
  Hands folded on the weary breast,
Feet that stand at the door of heaven,
  A soul that sighs for rest.

12

On earth a sunset paler growing,
  In heaven a morning cloudless clear,
Here moaning waves, there a sea of crystal,—
  Is better there or here?

Wrecked

1

LOW lies the moor on sunset's marge,
And past wide lands, the sea,
Where a gaunt wreck stands darkly forth
Between the sky and me.

2

Stands forth, forsaken like a ghost,
Upon a shifting land,
Who lifts bare arms for human help,
Yet must unaided stand.

3

And so my life lies past the moor,
And past the sands so wide,
And like a wreck floats on a sea
That has no other side.

4

The wreck of youth, and hope, and joy,
  Stranded on Time's wild shore,
While waves of sad Eternity
  Break o'er it evermore.

5

Oh, not for ever thus to stand
  Between the earth and sea,
While the white barks glide gaily past,
  And take no heed of me.

6

Leaneth toward the changeful shore
  Land that hath haven sure,
Standeth a sea of glass serene
  Where the tossed ship may moor.

7

There is, our God, a place of streams,
  There we go out no more.
O Christ! send winds of Paradise
  And waft me to that shore.

Comforted

1

WHEN the sun was crossing westwards,
From the North the tide came down,
Till the shining rocks were covered,
And the sea-weeds green and brown.

2

Then the women left their houses,
And the children left their play,
For the ship, the schooner *Dauntless*,
Took the tide and sailed away.

3

And among them, walking slowly,
While she sadly wrung her hands,
Came the captain's wife, just wedded,
And stood watching on the sands.

4

Watching how the moving vessel
On the waters rose and fell,
And the white waves danced and parted
In the long track of the swell.

5

Then she turned, and left them talking
By the sea so sad and bare,
Why should she stand longer looking,
And the ship no longer there?

6

Better working hard than weeping,
Tho' the heart ache with its pain;
And when winds of spring are blowing,
They will blow him home again.

* * * * *

7

Harvest moons, like watch-fires burning,
Lit the slopes of yellow sheaves,
And the autumn winds, like reapers,
Gathered in the yellow leaves.

8

Sobbing tides, that moaned of shipwreck,
Broke and shivered on the beach;
Souls went downwards in the darkness,
Where no earthly hand could reach.

9

'Mid the blasts of wintry tempests
Time was passing into spring,
And the captain's wife looked northwards
For the ship the winds should bring.

10

But the rain came to the casement,
Came the sad winds to the door,
Came the full tide and the ebb tide,
Came the ship—no more—no more.

11

But there came, as she sat waiting
One spring twilight of the year,
One who knocked and entered softly,
While she wondered without fear.

12

For the Christ spake in the darkness,
As of old, on Galilee:
"Heaven hath a gate to northwards,
And in Heaven is no more sea!"

Fiddling and Singing

HE played the fiddle, and she could sing,
And they lived on the money that this might bring,
In all the world they had but each other,
A singing sister—a fiddling brother.

His hair was brown, and his cheeks were red,
He wore a battered hat on his head,
His coat was ample,—too small his vest,
And of all things he loved his fiddle best.

Her hair hung down like a rope of gold,
Her eyes were the blue that never grows old,
And if you heard her sing in the street,
You would think that no bird had a voice more sweet.

He kept the purse as they went about,
And at night they counted the profits out,
She took the pence from the listening crowd,
And the thanks of both were curtsey'd and bowed.

I know no more of this strolling pair,
They are here to-day, and to-morrow there,
But by her bird voice, and his cunning hand,
I would know them again in any land.

The Lost Lyre

1

ONCE in a wood full green and fair
A long lost lyre was lying,
Which Youth, who chanced to wander there,
Thought erst to play by trying.

2

His pipe of reed aside he threw,
Tripped to an airy measure,
And then his eager fingers drew
Across his new found treasure.

3

But sad and silent lay the lyre
Like a dead heart, whose beating
Returns no more at fond desire
Or passionate entreating.

4

Then in the wood, grown dark and chill,
Sorrow, at even weeping,
Found the lost lyre, unheeded still,
Cast on the earth's cold keeping.

5

"Music was made for Grief's refrain,
Come, then, poor lyre, forsaken,
Mine be the joy, tho' fraught with pain,
Thy slumber to awaken."

6

In vain he swept the voiceless strings,
No sound of wail or gladness
Came forth to bear on tuneful wings
The melody of sadness.

7

But in the wood, at early morn,
While yet clear stars were shining,
Love, seeking, found the lyre forlorn
Where thicket boughs grew twining.

8

He struck the chords, and sweet and low
Came Music's voice replying,
Now glad as laughter's overflow,
Now faint as breath of sighing.

9

Then wakened tones came forth anew,
His cunning touch obeying,
And all the listening woodland through
The long lost songs went straying.

10

Whispers of joy, youth's jocund lays,
A minor struck for sorrow,
Full harmonies that call to praise,
Hope welcoming to-morrow.

11

O Love! that holy touch of thine
On human souls descending,
Wakes in their music notes divine,
Like earth and heaven blending.

12

One day in chorus full, complete,
Where discords enter never,
The lyres Thou tunest here shall meet,
And sound to Thee for ever.

The Legend of St. John of the Cross

1

IN his dark cell the monk lay dying,
The while at heaven's gate,
His soul enwrapt in holy visions,
Upon his Lord did wait.

2

And as he gazed to catch the glory,
Behold! before his bed,
The Saviour stood, a Man of Sorrows,
Thorn-crowned His sacred head.

3

Full on His servant looked He, blessing,
Love shone from out His woe,
And as the sunlight floods the darkness,
Made his mean cell to glow.

4

" I come thy need to meet with fulness,
Thy prayers to turn to praise;
Thy soul from out earth's woe and darkness
Into my bliss to raise.

5

Hast thou a longing yet unanswered?
Seekest thou one thing still?
I come to bless thee in departing,
And all desires fulfil."

6

Low knelt the monk in adoration,
All his desire was here;
Longing for heaven died in rapture,
For heaven is Christ brought near!

7

And as he knelt, before him slowly
Passed, as a dream of pain,
The cross, the mockery, the anguish,
The grave where Christ had lain.

8

His soul, with love and anguish breaking,
Cried, "Lord, I seek from Thee,
Grant me to share with Thee Thy suffering,
Lay Thou the most on me!"

9

Thus ever, Love by God made perfect,
Fears not the cross to bear;
Yet hath the Christ borne *all*, and only
Asks us His heaven to share.

Love Eternal

1

FROM that green May till now,—a year:
Time gathered looks so small,
Yet in an hour a story lies:
That year containeth all.

2

God sent a spring to wake the year,
His birds, His buds were gay,
And on the sea that seemed so sweet
My lover sailed away.

3

He took our blessing when he sailed,
He took our smiles, our tears;
Strange that such things should live and live,
And comfort after years.

4

Still, with my hand to shade my eyes,
I see that ship set sail,
And still, O Christ! and every day,
I hear that raving gale.

5

I see what I have never seen,
The deep that stretcheth far,
The white-lipped waves, the murky night
Without a moon or star.

6

And as I sit and weep to see,
God sends a fairer sight—
His blessed Son from heaven comes,
And walks the sea in white.

7

He stills their hearts, He easeth death,
They may not longer fear;
And this I know,—they live in Him,
And heaven lieth near.

8

And this is all my story told!
  My life hath nothing more;
I live because God holds my life,
  And keeps His heaven in store.

9

So in a sentence lies the tale
  Of love, of life, and death;
Love makes all sweetness in our life,
  And love is more than breath.

10

He loves who lives in God above,
  We love who still remain,
We breast the storm, the woe, the death,
  Then live and love again.

Autumn

1

WAS it the moon that dropped him
Out of her silver barge?
And left him then to wander
Over the world at large?

2

Dressed in a coat of russet,
Carrying golden sheaves,
And in his hat for feathers
A bunch of scarlet leaves.

3

Up in the trees you'll find him
Painting the apples red,
And where the ripe nuts cluster
Thither his feet have sped.

4

The corn heard of his coming
From sailing thistle-down;
Each wheat stem doffed her green dress
And donned a golden gown.

5

Into the wood he wandered,
And through the forest free;
He sang, "Oh, merry green leaves,
Come down and dance with me!"

6

And when the trees were leafless,
The milky filberts stored,
The mouse hid in the garner,
And the squirrel 'mid his hoard.

7

Under the stars he wandered,
Over the moor afar,
And left, in stepping outward,
The world's great door ajar.

8

Over the threshold Winter
  Peeped when the chill dawn broke;
He brought the birds red berries,
  The hills a snow-white cloak.

The Wood Sere Tints was Taking

1

THE wood sere tints was taking,
The air was gray and chill,
My heart was sore to breaking
With thoughts I could not still.

2

Brown leaves in autumn sadness
Across the fields were blown,
"And thus," I thought, "thy gladness
By sorrow's blast lies strown.

3

Thy spring's sweet bloom hath perished,
Thy summer's glory fled,
To the cold earth once cherished
Thou clingest bound and dead."

4

Then, lo! a clear voice singing
Far up beyond my sight,
A wandering bird was winging
To southern lands his flight.

5

Like pinion's measured motion
The song fell on my ear,
Stilling the heart's commotion
With thoughts of wondrous cheer.

6

Thy mellow tones ring ever,
Swift pilgrim of the skies:
"O soul, forget it never—
Thou too hast wings to rise."

(*From the German of E. Geibel.*)

PALE January's steely breath
One sleeper hath recalled from Death,
In robe of resurrection white
The snowdrop trembles into sight.

New Year

GOOD-MORROW, Sir and Madam,
And gentles great and small,
An't please you, I'm the New Year,
God save and keep you all!

I bring you back the snowdrops,
The cuckoo in the brake,
The red, red rose of summer,
The lilies to the lake.

I bring you joy and sorrow,
The flowers that deck the bier,
For I am God's veiled angel
Though I am called New Year!

The River

I KNOW a song of a river
As old as the stars and the sea,
And sweet as the song of angels
Is the song it sings to me.
I heard it first in the garden,
Where the children come and go,
While learning the holy stories
Which only the flowers know.

And there, while the white-browed lilies
Are telling, from day to day,
The old sweet words of the Master
Who was pure in heart as they,
The river was singing slowly,
As a mother sings to sleep,
And the words are words immortal
Which the spirit yearns to keep:

"I am the river, the river,
I call, where the children stand,
Come with me, where I am going
To sail through the wonder-land."

And the children lay like blossoms
On the river's shining breast,
While she sang and wandered slowly
To the mystic, shining West.
The sun was veiled and tender,
In the morning sky he smiled,
As he climbed the white cloud mountains
Like a dream-enchanted child.

The river is singing ever,
The music is sweet and clear,
But it is not the song of the children
That falls to-day on my ear.
For the running tide has borne me
Out of the garden of peace,
Down to the toil and the turmoil
Of the world where visions cease.

"I am the river, the river,
  The children have named me Life,
For I flow for ever onward
  Through youth and sorrow and strife.
I am the river, the river,
  I am coming from the past;
Come with me, O ye children,
  I will give you peace at last!"

The Good Comrade

I ONCE had a faithful comrade,
A better could not be,
When drums were beating loudly
He marched to battle proudly,
And step for step with me.

A cannon ball flew wildly,
"Am I hit? or is it thee?"
He falls beside me dying,
And at my feet is lying
As 'twere a part of me.

"Canst reach thy hand in parting,
My comrade good and true?"
"My hand I may not give thee,"—
Eternal life receive thee,
My comrade good and true!

(*From the German.*)

Heart's Ease

IS there a cure for the dull throb of pain
In hearts that still beat on, although they ache,
And under sorest sorrow cannot break,
But gather strength to suffer yet again?

Is there a balm to ease the smart of care
In weary hearts that fain would happy be,
Did the life load but press less heavily,
And tired fingers fail the cross to bear?

No human lips had ventured a reply,
But from the heart once broken under grief
That every other heart might find relief,
And gladness sing in spirits tuned to sigh,
Falls like the dew from heaven sweet and blest—
"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

Wings

1

OH, bird that art flying—flying
With spread wing over the sea—
Could'st thou bear me up on thy pinion,
I would heavenward go with thee.

2

For the earth is sad and dreary,
And the sky above is bright,
And I seem to dwell in the shadow
And thou in the clear daylight.

3

And yet of our very crosses,
Of our daily work and strife,
We can make ourselves wings as eagles,
And rise to the unseen life.

4

Thy wings, little bird, can bear thee
Far up where the calm stars shine,
But stay! listen, and I will tell thee
Where I can be borne on mine.

5

Tho' thou canst go up to heaven,
Yet there thou must sing and wait:
I can fly to the golden city,
And go in at the pearly gate.

6

For the wings of prayer are swifter
Than the swiftest bird's white wing,
And the song of faith is louder far
Than the song the skylarks sing.

Questions

WHAT do you see where you walk, white moon?
What do you see?
"A mist that enfolds the valley,
The breeze that stirs the tree.

A hearth where the children gather,
Two lovers that whisper low,
A sick man in restless slumber,
And the river's ceaseless flow.

A watchman that paces slowly,
Young birds in a swaying nest,
A wanderer in the forest,
The snow on a mountain's crest.

A babe asleep in its cradle,
  A mother that weeps alone,
A ship on the waters tossing,
  A grave with a cross for stone!"

The Way

A MOUNTAIN track where shadows darkly lie,
But sunshine, too, was there when day was high,
And where thorns leaning tear the lambs' soft wool,
A crystal stream descends, his feet to cool;
A lonely track, where once a Shepherd went
To seek lost sheep, upon the sharp ascent,
And where His feet have been, way-worn and sore,
Others may tread who found no path before.

The Right Way

"And led them by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."

FORTH from the power of self, and sin, and death,
Forth at the summons of the four winds' breath,
Forth from the darkness of an exiled child,
Into the joy of being reconciled;
So, by the right way, thorny though it be,
Lead us by Thy Good Spirit back to Thee.

Forth from the highways of our own self-will
Into the valley, till the heart grows still;
Forth from the scenes of earthly gain and loss,
Up to the hill of suffering and the cross;
There joy through sorrow, life through death to see,
And by the "right way" come, O God, to Thee!

Forth from the unrest of a heart that knows
No place of changeless love and sure repose,
Into the quiet of the Saviour's peace,
Into the pardon where all terrors cease,
Into the "right way," to the Father's side,
Lead us in safety ever to abide.

We know the uplands stretch all dark and high,
And storm clouds gather in the frowning sky,
But He who leadeth will from ill defend,
Doth not the "right way" in the "right home'
end?
It lies before us where we cannot see,
Yet through the dark we journey on to Thee!

Forth from the changeful and the shifting shore
Up to the city where they "weep no more!"
Forth from the country where the exiles roam,
Up to the Father's many-mansioned home.
This is the end—long tho' the journey be,
It is the "right way" if it end in Thee.

Companionship

1

LORD, not alone our way we take,
Through Thy wide world below,
Since some befriend us for Thy sake,
And some the way to show.

2

Thy mercies daily round us crowd,
And heav'nly love express,
Like cherub faces from a cloud,
Leaning our steps to bless.

3

Sweet joys with flutt'ring wings attend,—
Birds that have here no nest,—
They hover round us, then ascend,
Pointing our home and rest.

4

Angels beside us hourly walk,—
  Ways rough for such to tread,
But that the King of whom they talk
  Earth too hath visited.

5

And Grief, with whom He was acquaint,
  Sits by her Marah spring,
And whispers still to souls that faint,
  "Perfect through suffering."

6

But, Lord, alone at last we near
  A solemn, silent place;
Thine is the only voice we hear,
  We see not yet Thy face.

7

Alone we look on Death, that friend
  Dreadful, though with the smile
Mothers might on an infant bend,
  Its suffering to beguile.

8

Keep for our strength'ning, then, the thought,
That from Thy cross of pain
Thy lonely look on Death has bought
Our victory and gain.

9

That to the heaven that lies before
Our long-fled joys are come,
And those have passed the shining door
Who made on earth our home.

10

They crowd upon the golden street,
Friend walks with friend in white,
The nations of the saved shall meet,
And Thou shalt be their Light.

Friendship

THE soul that sighed in ages gone
After its Lord, its heaven, its Friend
Hath found one now that Christ in heaven,
Since Friendship lives, though Time may end.

Prayer

THE wintry earth shall bloom again, I know,
And sunshine laugh upon the chilly snow,
And sheaths of grass from frozen roots appear,
And dreaming hearts shall whisper, "Spring is near."

New make, O new-creating Lord, my love,
That all for earth hath been and naught above,
New-make this love—more tender, strong, and brave,
Love that will love, endure, and long to save.

Answers

I

BECAUSE my prayer no answer brought,
I said, "It shall not be.
Others their good have found when sought,
It is not so with me."

2

I made a grave within my heart
To hide it from my sight.
"Dead sorrows," said I, "cannot smart,
Nor withered blossoms blight."

3

And then, O wisest Friend and true,
Who let'st no grief o'erflow;
Who makest dead things live anew,
And withered things to grow;

4

Though we have but our dark and bright,
Thou hast a boundless store,
All good lies hidden in Thy sight,
And grows from more to more.

5

Thou gavest not my wish again,—
But love, far-seeing, wise,
Made patience spring from out the pain,
Hope break through cloudy skies.

6

And this I learnt: no prayer we pray
Strays from the road we mean,
But climbs, on Faith, the sunbeam's ray,
Into God's great Unseen.

7

And God makes answer, soon or late,
Through sky of smiles or tears,
He does not count it long to wait,
He counts not life by years.

8

I will not mourn the altered case
Of prayer returned to me;
That which hath seen the Father's face
For ever changed must be.

The Patience of Hope

THE world's as full of Hope as heav'n of stars,
And so take heart to scan life's cloudy bars;
Out of the East spring dawn, and day's delight,
The lark's sweet treble, and the shadow's flight.

There's hope in that dull earth, tho' now it lies
Heavy upon the snowdrop's closèd eyes,
Warm sunshine breathing thro' the kindly mould
Shall all her hidden loveliness unfold.

And each shy bird upon her leafy nest
Feedeth with hope the love within her breast,
Watching in patience thro' the growing days,
While for the joy to come her mate gives praise.

Trees in their wintry arms enfold the spring,
Tho' long we wait to hear the blackbird sing;
Gray skies will brighten, and the bold buds show
Green smiling faces to the tardy snow.

Unto the patient heart God sendeth, too,
Songs sweeter than the lark's, the morning dew;
Beams brighter than on waking flowers fall,
Spring after winter, Heaven after all.

Waiting

1

NO haste with God appears,
His work no hurry needs,
Only Man's restless heart
For ever onward speeds.

2

Slowly life's purpose moves,
And from His open book,
In days, and months, and years,
Grows to a steadfast look.

3

Grows, and expands, and is,
Enters our hearts at core,
Makes or unmakes our thoughts,
Which are the same no more.

4

Slow is the tide of tears,
  Sudden the wave of joy,
Yet each to work its end
  A lifetime may employ.

5

And slowly down the sea
  Of life we float, we sail,
Strange that we watch the sky
  And seek the passing gale.

6

We would arrest the waves,
  Backward the waters turn,
Open the book of life
  And all its meaning learn.

7

Better to sit as blind
  Low at the Master's feet,
And let life's story run
  Just as He seeth meet.

8

O better far to float
  On waters of God's will,
Each joined in plan to each,
  One purpose to fulfil.

9

And then at evensong
  Into the haven glide,
See heaven round us shine,
  Earth on the farther side.

10

Read in the face of Christ
  All that was dim before,
And hear life's latest wave
  Die on the crystal shore.

11

To give us joy like this,
  Thou, O our Lord, canst wait,
There is no haste in Thee
  To shut Thy golden gate.

12

Forgive our eager haste,
Our foolish blind desire,
Our thoughts that earthward turn
And yet to Thee aspire.

13

Give us a patient heart
To wait, and yet to serve;
Give us a watchful love
Thy purpose to observe.

14

And ever in our soul
Let this Thy promise dwell,
And as Thy voice the storm
All our disquiet quell.

15

"That which I do, O child,
Thou seest not below;
Wait, and in Paradise
Thou shalt the meaning know."

An Advent Thought

1

WHEN I am lying still and deep,
Roofed in with daisies overhead,
In the great quiet where dead men sleep,
Each folded in his narrow bed.

2

I know how life will move along,
As breath that heeds not though we sleep,
For work can do the dead no wrong,
And time can spare few hours to weep.

3

Silent into the red-ribbed sky
The light will creep when stars turn pale,
And sad, as breath of those who die,
Will pant the seaward going gale.

4

And through sweet summers mild and bright,
Like friends who left us come again,
And through the frosts of winter's white,
For years and years the time will wane;

5

Till, like slow-moving clouds that bend
Their fringes to the golden west,
It steadfast travels to the end,
The end of all, when all shall rest.

6

For standing solemn, 'mid the years,
The latest born 'mid ages hoar,
Looms on the earth the day of fears,
When time—our life—shall be no more;

7

When, like pale shadows fled away,
Our tears shall melt in hues of peace.
And as the dark before the day,
At Christ's appearing, sorrows cease.

Praise of the Heavenly Country

1

OH, that the heavenly City
Would call me hence away,
In Zion, David's tranquil rest,
Eternally to stay.

2

The Light of Light its framer is,
Its gates that stand so wide
Are builded from the cross on which
The Christ was crucified.

3

The living Stone its walls adorns,
Its Keeper is the King;
And in that city dwelleth Light,
Peace, and Eternal Spring.

4

One hymn of praise the Heavens fills,
There is the festive song,
There, there is nothing that offends,
No want, no woe, no wrong.

5

Nothing imperfect there hath place,
No vanity, no care,
The saints who dwell within these gates
Christ's perfect image bear.

6

O happy, heavenly City,
Built on the Rock secure,
I greet thee from this far-off land,
Thou haven safe and sure!

7

I greet thee, sighing, seeking thee,
Panting thy face to see,
There to be fully satisfied,
And there at peace to be.

8

How thy glad citizens rejoice,
  Sharing the feast of joy;
How every heart with gladness glows
  Unshadowed by alloy!

9

What gems upon thy walls are seen,
  Transparent jacinth's light,
And glory of chalcedony
  Know they who walk in white!

10

There in the city's golden streets
  The holy people throng,
There Moses and Elias join
  In the eternal song.
Alleluia!

(*From the Latin.*)

"I Wept as I Lay Dreaming"

I WEPT as I lay dreaming,
Methought thou wert lying dead;
I woke, and my cheek was moistened
With the tears that I had shed.

I wept as I lay dreaming,
Methought thou wert gone from me;
I woke, and I still was weeping
Tears, that fell bitterly!

I wept as I lay dreaming,
For I dreamed that thou wert true;
I woke, and still ever, and still ever, and still ever,
The tears streamed forth anew.

(*From the German of Heine.*)

THERE will come a day,
There will come a day,
When sorrow and sighing too
Shall flee away;
And that for aye,
And that for aye.

Resurgam

1

YE shall not keep me, daisies, in the grass,
When it is time to rise,
Though now ye whisper to the folk that pass,
"She rests with earth-sealed eyes."
Ah, me! dear hearts, I do but sleep away
My weariness until the waking day.

2

Thou shalt not keep me, mother Earth, at rest,
When the morn eastward glows,
Though now I slumber in thy quiet breast
While the world onward goes;
I only pray thee, "Cover me a space,
My Lord is furnishing a better place."

3

Ye shall not keep me, bitter tears of Time,
That now oppress the dead,
Sad rains that drop through spring and summer prime
Through flowers above my head;
Sing, birds, above me in the golden air,
Blow, happy winds, although I cannot hear.

4

Thou shalt but keep me, Sleep, that some call Death,
Until I rested be,
The heavenly trumpet hath a quickening breath
That will awaken me;
Methinks I shall not grieve to leave my bed
When God sees meet to call the blessed dead.

5

And you, dear flowers, sweet Earth, kind sleep of Death,
I thank you for your care,
But for the daisies and the kindly mould
I had indeed been bare;

But for the darkness, that like blessing fell,
I had not slept so soundly and so well.

6

Ye will not marvel that I long to hear
  The bridal cry, "Awake"—
Or that the lingering years so long appear
  That weary Time must take,
Till Jesus comes, with all His saints to say,
"Now the day breaks, the shadows flee away!"

The Three Captors

WRITTEN IN THE AUTHOR'S 18TH YEAR, THE EARLIEST POEM IN THIS COLLECTION.

1

THREE bonds my heart in different ages held,
Eras of life from which all first did grow,
As from the new-born year the Spring bursts forth,
And in her train the sister seasons go.

2

The first in golden youth me captive led,
When all my way in morning light did lie,
Time at my feet, and life a birthright free,
Joy led my soul in sweet captivity.

3

As the half-risen sun of summer dawn,
Pillowed on clouds, looks forth in untried strength,
So in the gladness of my youth I gazed
Upon my future and its unknown length.

4

Till, lo! a shadow stole across the sun,
And youth grew pale, and withered like a flower;
Joy dropped the chains, and fled in fear and haste;
Sorrow next held me with resistless power.

5

Phœnix-like from the ashes Manhood rose,
And Sorrow, smiting, bid him learn to bear;
Then with crushed hopes, and heart with suffering tried,
She loosed her bonds and left him chainless there.

6

And in the darkness, where no star gave light,
Manhood, in prayer, saw *Peace* come softly near,
And while she raised the chain by Sorrow dropped,
Blessed him in tones which calmed each throbbing fear.

7

And, lo! up-gazing, tranced in holy thought,
Joy stood with Sorrow linked in happy reign,
No longer captors, nor I captive now,
The eras of my being met again.

8

Joy, with the gladness of his first sweet smile,
Looked without fear in Sorrow's pallid face;
And she, with tears that dried before Joy's gaze,
Welcomed him to her arms in kind embrace.

9

Joy, Sorrow, Peace, a blessed companionship,
Each came to reign in threefold power and grace,
Joy in my heart, and Sorrow in my life,
And Peace, the victor, with her heavenly face.

10

The while Joy shed the sunlight of his love,
And Sorrow, lest he dazzle, cast a shade,—
Gave me a quiet soul, all free from fear,—
And over Life and Death her sceptre swayed.

11

To Sorrow only must I say farewell;
She is God's servant, and on earth must wait;
But she will hold my hand until the last,
And we in company shall reach the Gate.

12

Then Joy—for perfect holiness grown meet
And to the measure of full manhood grown—
Will press among the ranks of white-robed saints,
And fall in wondering praise before the throne.

13

And Peace, without a single fear of ill,
Radiant in all the safety of Christ's smile,
Will in His presence find her blessedness,
And cast her crown before His feet the while.

Death of the Rose

THE AUTHOR'S LAST COMPOSITION, FOUND AFTER HER DEATH.

IT grew in a garden. It was given to a fair young girl to wear. She put it on her breast. It smelt sweetly, and bloomed until the evening, and then she threw it down, for it had withered, and the hot sunshine, which had once breathed life and colour into its opening petals, now hastened its drooping to death.

Next morning it lay on the dust heap. It was still fair, but its petals hung loosely down, and it was no longer the thing of life and beauty of a day ago.

Two children passed the dust heap. "Look, Fritz," said the little girl, "here is a rose. It will revive in water, and we will lay it upon mother's breast."

They picked it off the heap, and carried it home.

They lived in a room which adjoined the river. Outside the tiny window was a narrow balcony, where you looked down into the dark muddy water, and got a glimpse of the old stone Roman bridge, beneath whose massive arches it had swirled and eddied for thousands of years.

In a dark corner against the wall stood a poor bed, and a dead woman lay on it, with thin, toil-worn hands, quiet now, and crossed upon her breast.

A Sister knelt beside her until the coffin was carried out.

"See, Sister, we have found a rose," cried the children, as they ran into the still room. "It is to lay on mother, we will place it on her heart, it has a dark fresh bud," and they held up the drooping flower to be admired.

The Sister smiled. "We will first give it a drink of water," she said, as she placed it in a tin mug on the narrow window ledge.

The dead mother had loved flowers, and a green

box outside, with some fading green leaves, still remained to show her once gay window garden.

Next morning she was carried away, but the rose went with her to the quiet grave, with its faded petals dropping on her dead heart.

To the Sister it preached a little sermon, reminding her that the flower and the body both go down to the dust of death, but that the seed of life remains in the tree from which the flower sprang, and in the soul which inhabited the body, and that for both there is a spring which we call resurrection.

And again, who shall say that the mission of anything on earth is over, because withered to the eye of man, and lying useless on the dust heap, apparently in readiness for the oblivion of the strange elements that congregate there?

A dying rose may have its mission, as much as the dewy bud cut in its beauty for the bridal feast.

THE END

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